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ABSTRACT

Experiences with and studies of a formal network of 18 elementary schools--the League of Cooperating Schools (LCS)--in Southern California are described and analyzed in a narrative account, with observations, of the network's creation and maturation. This set of formal agreements between the school districts and the Research Division of the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc. (IDEA) was designed to provide IDEA with access to the schools to study their self-improvement efforts, in return for human resources to assist with these efforts, and information to be derived from these studies. Underlying concepts included the view that the individual school is a key unit for change within the system of education and the principal is critical to the process, and that change must occur under enormous constraints of the external systems. Meetings between principals established this group as critical to decision-making and a newsletter helped to increase network information/communication. The IDEA office maintained a monitoring research function, but encountered problems concerning degree of consulting assistance, information overkill, and role of the expert. Despite problems, principals, teachers, students, and parents emerge as the major resources for improvement of schools. However, more educational data is needed in order to propose constructive reform. (CWM)

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NETWORKING AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

REFLECTIONS ON A STRATEGY

by

John I. Goodlad

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NETWORKING AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

REFLECTIONS ON A STRATEGY

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The first section of this paper describes and analyzes experiences with and research on a formal network of 18 elementary schools in Southern California. The sets of relationships involved, as recounted here, were cultivated for six years. The backdrop throughout is personal association as principal investigator for a large-scale inquiry into educational change, using this consortium of schools as the laboratory both for implementing a strategy and for studying its development.

The paper is divided into two sections. The first, by far the longer, is a narrative account of the network's creation and maturation. Interspersed throughout are observations on the effectiveness of the strategy and on the functioning of its several components. Recommendations appear in the context of the topic discussed. Rather than attempting a summary of specifics at the end, I have written a short second section of observations, conclusions and generalizations based on what precedes.

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THE LEAGUE OF COOPERATING SCHOOLS

Description

The League of Cooperating Schools (LCS) was created in 1966 through a set of formal agreements between 18 school districts in Southern California and the Research Division of the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc. (|I|D|E|A|). Only a brief description of the genesis, organization and conduct of the League is provided here. Readers desiring more information should refer to the |I|D|E|A| Reports on Schooling (6 volumes published by McGraw-Hill), particularly the volume by Bentzen and Associates (1974) and the final report by me (Goodlad, 1975) which includes the contract signed by the participating parties. The League clearly fits within the definition of formal networks: deliberately established, with structure and functions independent of the members or incumbents populating it at any given time. Membership was closed with the League's creation, largely to maintain the same sample for research purposes.

The quid pro quo, although not the only organizing principle, loomed large. |I|D|E|A| would provide some human resources to assist the schools with self-improvement in return for access to these schools for purposes of studying their efforts. The schools would open their doors to researchers, get some assistance from the |I|D|E|A| field staff and receive certain information derived from the research. The formal agreements expressed these mutual commitments and anticipated benefits only in very general terms. Nonetheless, the differing interests were recognized with sufficient clarity to give some guidelines to subsequent behavior.

|I|D|E|A| is an affiliate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. Although some officials of the participating schools and school districts might have envisioned financial benefits from their association with the League, it was made clear at the outset that no

funds would be provided for them. Indeed, the agreements specified some small additional costs to the districts: a day of leave and travel expenses for principals to attend monthly meetings, occasional substitutes to permit teachers to visit other schools, some possible additional secretarial costs, and so on. If there were initial expectations for direct cash grants, these soon were dissipated. All parties were expected both to give and to receive.

To understand the LCS and much of what follows, it is necessary to view it as an invention or, if you wish, THE innovation. Suddenly, there it was: 18 schools with ill-defined relationships with and responsibilities to one another they did not have the day before, and an office in West Los Angeles, named the Research Division of |I|D|E|A|. It was a new social system in the making, made up of 18 old, previously disconnected, parts and one new one. (|I|D|E|A| had been created some months before.) The potentially new social system could be left alone and the parts never would become systemic. Or it could be massaged into some sort of functioning entity.

The idea of the League as an invention is important for at least two reasons. First, signing agreements to bring it into existence and naming it did not breathe life into it or cause it to touch anything else. In many ways, it was akin at this point to the innovative non-events to which Charters and Jones so aptly refer--for example, team-taught classrooms talked about as a school's innovation but which, in fact, did not exist (Charters and Jones, 1973). The care and feeding the League required is akin to that required by any invention or innovation if it is to take hold in the ways intended. In my judgment, it would be a mistake to create formal networks of the kind represented by the League only to facilitate low-energy access to trusted information, although this was one of its purposes (Miles and Lake, 1975). The League was a relatively high-energy proposition, a condition I believe to be characteristic of any innovation designed

to reconstruct schooling in some significant way. If what we want from networks is low-energy access to trusted information, we must look to configurations demanding much less of the participants. I shall have more to say on this subject later.

Second, the League was intended to set in motion new kinds of processes and relationships and was not intended to install some already identified innovations such as new curricula, patterns of school organization or approaches to teaching--although any of these might emerge from the processes expected to occur. This was very puzzling to visitors, especially from abroad. They wanted to know what innovations we were promoting and to what schools they might go to observe them. In the late 1960's, the idea of creating a new social system with alternative expectations, rules, activities, and rewards was countervailing to the conventional wisdom of school reform.

From one perspective, then, the LCS was a strategy for educational change comprised initially of the following: 18 schools in as many school districts, at least a title (The League) implying collaboration among them and a hub or central agency (|I|D|E|A|). There were also expectations for principals to meet regularly and for teachers to communicate in various ways. Most superintendents anticipated that the schools were to become innovative and, ultimately, would serve as demonstration or lighthouse sites. The superintendents had selected the schools at the invitation of |I|D|E|A|, using whatever procedures they wished. We reserved the right to reject schools that too closely approximated other schools in the sample; we wanted diversity.

From another perspective, the LCS was the research laboratory for a project entitled, The Study of Educational Change and School Improvement (SECSI). Our staff at |I|D|E|A| was to study how school faculties went about improving their schools,

employing data derived from what we observed, heard, or gathered with instruments for the most part developed for our specific purposes. This documentation included some 60,000 feet of film, later sharply cut and edited into four segments.* It was agreed that we would provide school personnel with as much of our data as they wanted. Although there was some in-house differentiation at the outset between those on our staff who were to do the research and those who were to assist the schools, it is doubtful that this distinction was evident externally. This distinction proved to be dysfunctional; later, the two groups were merged into one.

Some Underlying Concepts and Assumptions

The LCS emerged out of the desire to test an hypothesis that had been taking shape in my mind over a period of a decade: the school with its principal, teachers, students and patrons is the key unit for educational change and improvement (Goodlad, 1955)--not the district as a whole nor the individual principal or teacher, but the school as a social system or culture (Sarason, 1971). The hypothesis began to take on the character of a principle for me during the early 1960's, while participating in several projects (Conant, 1963; Goodlad, 1964 and 1966) and from experiences with visitors to the University Elementary School at UCLA (which I have served as Director since 1960).

By 1965, the School had implemented several of the most widely touted innovations of the time (nongrading, team teaching, individualized instruction, etc.) and was attracting thousands of visitors each year. Many who wanted to replicate what they saw

*These films, entitled "The League" are available from |I|D|E|A|, Mail Orders, P. O. Box 628, Dayton, Ohio 45419.

expressed frustration over doing so in the home setting. There was no structure for effecting change, they seemed to be saying, and they felt impotent in the face of effecting such a structure. What I was hearing fit my hypothesis that the school as a whole must be involved if significant reconstruction is to occur. Indeed, even those instructional changes teachers wish to bring about in their own classrooms frequently will die aborning if the cultural milieu is unsupportive.

Large numbers who came asked for our later assistance. Some left enthusiastically anticipating what they would do back home, but the record shows that few were able to bring off very much. Jumping ahead a few years, our later study of 67 elementary schools showed that our visitors were not alone in their inability to effect the reforms so vigorously advocated in the 1960's (Goodlad, Klein and Associates, 1970).

In 1966, thanks to a grant from the Kettering Foundation, I was able to take a little time to reflect on the experiences of the preceding ten years and to read the growing but still limited body of literature on institutional change. The so-called linear R D and D approach, which House (1974) subsequently has reviewed so effectively, was gaining currency. In article after article, I read about the importance of clear objectives, precise means, feedback loops, etc., all concluding with what appeared to be a lame exhortation about "putting the product or change into the system."

It seemed to me that the most important and difficult part was getting short shrift. It also seemed to me that the assumptions of somebody doing something to someone else who, in turn, was waiting expectantly and passively "to be done to" simply did not fit my view of schools and school people. My reviews of the ongoing curriculum reform movement (1964 and 1966) suggested a much less malleable school character and a much greater propensity for rejecting or defusing whatever deviated more than a little from that character. It is not easy to put something into the system.

The more I thought about it, the less promising as a change strategy R D and D appeared to be. In part, it is an updated version of a process of knowledge production and dissemination that has gone on for centuries. Knowledge is created and disseminated, people read, talk to one another, try things, compare notes; over time, ideas penetrate institutions and ways of doing things change. The process has been accelerated through urbanization, membership in organizations, the press, radio, television, and so on. It becomes a change strategy when specific means are deliberately hooked up to clear, agreed-upon and, ideally, assumed purposes. But it is a change strategy headed for trouble if the target for change does not share these purposes and views the means as inappropriate, irrelevant, inadequate or too demanding--or if the target simply resents intrusion or interference.

The requisite conditions for R D and D to be an effective change strategy decline as one moves from factories producing simple products such as paper containers, to factories producing complex products such as airplanes, to armies, to social institutions such as hospitals and schools and finally to communities (which schools closely resemble). Indeed, as one moves along this array to schools, the potential usefulness of a theory of schooling or a theory of educational change that begins with purposes derived externally from and not with the setting or institution appears to decline.

I searched my experience for alternative assumptions and postulates. Schools are only mildly goal-oriented; to be intensively so would be innovative. Such a statement does not necessarily mean that they are goal-less, if wanting to teach young people to read and write and spell may be thought of as goals. Rather, schools are oriented primarily to survival, activities and maintenance. Like communities, they seek to provide services, a measure of safety, certain controls over individual behavior--to be reasonably habitable. For principals, this means that records must be maintained,

reports prepared and stable relationships established with parents and the community. For teachers, a habitable classroom has adequate materials and supplies and not too many students. A school is more an ecosystem requiring health and harmony among its parts than it is a vehicle going some place or a factory producing something. Attention to means before ends is a more accurate description of both the self-image and functioning of a school than is the ends-before-means stereotype.* It probably is more useful in thinking about change to look at least as much toward what constitutes a healthy school ecosystem--that is, functioning well according to criteria of internal well-being--as to its healthful characteristics or to what the school is good for (Goodlad, 1976). Such a view shifts our attention from myopic preoccupations only with effects to interest in the setting itself. Both need to be kept in perspective.

This kind of thinking led me to lay out a series of propositions for educational improvement which became the conceptual framework for the League of Cooperating Schools. Most of these, in somewhat abbreviated form, were published later (Goodlad, 1972). It appeared to me then, and I believe this firmly now, that for significant change to occur there must be a continuing, productive tension between inner and outer forces (Ekstein, 1974). Internally, the condition is homeostasis (a tendency toward maintaining a relatively stable condition). Externally, there is the stimulation of ideas (elsewhere I have referred to the concept of "an alternative drummer"; Goodlad, 1975); encouragement to try and even to risk failure, and support in the face of failure; opportunities to

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*I am taking liberties here in so personifying schools, but schools are people; without them, we have only a schoolhouse.

observe and converse with peers at various stages in the development of desired new behaviors; occasions to reflect evaluatively with others--in effect, there is a supportive but persistent and perhaps insistent outside force. Properly conceived and implemented, a network could provide these inner and outer forces.

Most approaches to educational change, however much they recognize the importance of involving school personnel in the process, proceed largely on the assumption that it is only the school as target or client that is to change. Such a view virtually guarantees a short-term relationship and, in most instances, failure. The desired dynamic requires recognition of and provision for simultaneous inner and outer adaptation, accommodation and change. Synergy results from the fact that the organisms in the synthesis are initially different and must continue to be different or they cease to be of use to one another. For a "change agent" to coopt or be coopted by a client, whether or not initial goals are achieved in the process, is to eliminate the tension required for continuing change to occur. Such a notion flies in the face of many consulting relationships, for example.

The concepts and assumptions I laid out in 1966 reflected a recognition of both sets of forces and a reluctance to substitute a model of inner-oriented change for an outer-oriented one simply because of recognized shortcomings in the latter. A decade later, it is fair to say that there is danger today in doing just that; we are prone to shift from one excess to another.

The conceptualization guiding the League was, at best, a rationale and ought not to be graced by the word "theory." In its initial formulation, I was influenced by Parsons, Getzels, Griffiths, Clark, Guba, and Brickell, to name only a few, but none is liable for any blame; some even may disagree with parts of it. The assumptions formulated in 1966

still stand for me as a result of the six years of experience with the LCS. However, several now stand out as being of critical importance and others must be added. Several statements are somewhat changed from the original to reflect this experience but the meaning is essentially unchanged.

1. The key unit for change within the system of education is the individual school with its principal, teachers, students, parents, and community relationships. All of the basic ingredients of learning and teaching reside here. Anything from elsewhere, to make a difference, must be integrated into the culture of this unit so as to change it.

2. The principal, as designated, responsible leader of this unit, is critical to attaining or impeding the attainment of a dynamic setting.

3. The systems of which the school is a part exercise enormous constraints, constraints which are essentially conservative and which serve to discourage change and innovation. These systems are not only the formal, political ones of state and local organization for education, they are also informal, exerting subtle pressure by way of implicit and explicit expectations for schooling and for the behavior of teachers and administrators.

4. If change is to occur at anything like a more rapid rate than is characteristic of the whole, the existence or creation of a countercyclical or re-directing system of considerable salience may be critical.

5. The new directions posed by the countervailing system inevitably will call for new behaviors on the part of those for whom this system is salient.

6. Threat and insecurity for these individuals and for others in the traditionally oriented systems are bound to result.

7. If the threat and insecurity are great--and they are almost bound to be substantial if the changes in behavior called for are significant--then the salience of the countercyclical

system (in the form of significant rewards, for example) must be insistent, persistent, and sustained over continued crises. The countervailing system must not be regarded as a temperamental, waxing and waning, short-term arrangement. And the desired image must be earned.

8. But even a countercyclical system in time becomes harmonious with what it sought to change. Therefore, such a system must have built into it either self-terminating or unique self-renewing facilities. Continuous research and inquiry into the system has promising potential for self-renewal.

9. The provocation to change must be accompanied or followed by access to the new knowledge and skills that are called for on the part of those who are to effect change.

10. Any significant change calls for access to both conceptual and operating models of the changed behavior and to opportunities to learn whatever new behaviors are called for.

Massaging the League as a Social System

The above and some memoranda regarding the mechanics of operating the League provided an orientation to the staff of the Research Division of |I|D|E|A|, recruited during the summer and fall of 1966. The League itself had been in a process of forming since May, 1965, when the possibilities for it were discussed with approximately 25 school superintendents, 18 of whom decided to commit a school to it, usually following discussion with their respective boards of education. This part of the process was described earlier.

What has not been discussed is the varying kinds of information about the League provided to school personnel. We deliberately did not intervene

in the selection process, except to seek heterogeneity in the sample of schools. Some superintendents discussed the proposed project with school principals and made the selection on their advice; some simply told the principal his or her school was "in"; one announced it in the local newspaper without first telling the principal and the school's staff. Some principals discussed the idea with teachers from the beginning; some did not. The teachers who got the news in the morning paper asked their principal to get them out of it. He did not.

This background is important because the creation of networks frequently is associated with a spirit of voluntarism. There is a process of self-selection and, perhaps, a certain self-image of elitism. Undoubtedly, the latter was present with membership in the League, too--"we have been chosen." But there was resentment as well. Images, expectations and feelings present at the beginning and their later impact need careful study.

A great deal more could and should be said about these beginnings, particularly the almost uniform expectation that we knew exactly what we wanted the schools to do and, after the preliminary niceties of asking what they, the principals and teachers wanted to do, would lay out the real agenda. As one principal put it later, "We knew that at some time or other, John Goodlad and his staff would tell us what to do. Believe me, it never happened." Since these details are discussed elsewhere (Bentzen, 1974; Goodlad, 1975), I shall skip over them and move on to some observations regarding the functioning of the principal elements of the League, elements designed to implement the conceptualization summarized on preceding pages.

The functioning of the school faculty as a decision-making, self-directing entity occupied our attention from the beginning. It was difficult for some members of our staff

to rid themselves of the prevailing notion of installing innovations and move to one of helping to develop self-renewing processes in the schools. Several never did. Their desire (perhaps for want of an alternative self-image) to be experts in this or that hot topic of the day was reinforced by school personnel who wanted "expert" help and so was perpetuated even in the face of |I|D|E|A| staff discussions of the dangers involved. We pushed hard for principals to take the lead in conducting staff meetings geared to discussion of important school problems. Some principals, in turn, used every trick in the book to seduce our field staff into taking over this responsibility as frequently as possible. And, for a time, at least, flattery got some of them everywhere.

It soon became apparent to us that faculty dialogue leading to decisions and decisions leading to action and, later, some form of evaluation is rare and extraordinarily difficult to attain in schools. We came to call the process DDAE; DDAE became an important variable in our research. Researchers and others outside of schools refer glibly to needs assessments, group decision-making, problem-solving and like matters as though they are either a normal part of staff functioning or relatively easy to develop. A few training sessions will do the trick, it is assumed.

Our experience says that it is almost impossible to overestimate the difficulty of developing on the part of school staffs high-level DDAE as standard, operating procedure. Even establishing a regular schedule of meetings and securing attendance at them are not easy. Pre- and post-planning are critical but take place all too rarely (Bahner, 1960). Dialogue informed by reading and sharpened by well-formulated alternative views is even more rare. The subject matter too often is relatively insignificant; clear-cut decisions are the exception; and decisions, when made, either are not followed up with

action or do not guide subsequent behavior. I believe this highly critical summary not to be overdrawn. It may explain why Griffin (1970) concluded that curricular planning is less likely to occur at the institutional than at societal and instructional levels of decision-making. It may also explain why faculty meetings so often constitute subject matter in collective bargaining. Some teachers regard them as an imposition.

The 18 schools in the League varied widely, at the beginning and throughout the project, in their attainment of high-level DDAE according to criteria developed by a committee of principals and teachers. The process took on increased significance as the League matured. Even those rating themselves high on the criteria expressed dissatisfaction with it: inadequate preparation for meetings, limited participation, domination by a few, inability to reach an operational consensus, inept leadership on the part of principals, inadequate follow-through, etc. Our research revealed association among high DDAE and high teacher morale, professionalism and feelings of self-worth. Barry's later study (1974) concluded that a school's propensity for change, as she called it, tends to be retained once a high level of DDAE is established.

There is a belief among some educators, including myself, that a self-renewing school (and that is a relative term) is, among other things, responsive to its own condition and seeks to do away with undesirable conditions and strengthen desirable ones. It also is responsive to alternatives and aware of potentially useful resources external to itself. Unless schools are capable of achieving such responsiveness, the virtue of decentralized authority and responsibility for decision-making and acting must be subjected to careful scrutiny. A point to be made here is that responsive schools are a scarce commodity; they must be carefully nurtured. A second point is that achieving them in large numbers presents problems of such magnitude and complexity that the

commitment of time, money and energy required to surmount the difficulties is rarely made. Nonetheless, one must ponder seriously the implications of not making the effort.

There was a time, just a few years ago, when I was optimistic about our having learned from the '60's the folly of reducing school improvement to simple problems and simple solutions, usually calling for some injection into the system and support from categorical funds. I am not now optimistic. There seems to be a never-ending supply of legislators, school board members, do-gooders, researchers, charlatans, scholars and self-selected experts who know what is wrong and what to do about it. The slogan, "back to the basics," serves no better today than it did in the early '50's. The real danger in "reform by panacea" is that it obscures both the complexity of school improvement and the fact that schooling can be fundamentally reconstructed. Our experience with the whole school as the unit raises my spirits regarding the potential of long-term projects such as the League but sobers me regarding the commitment and hard work required.

We took the position from the beginning that the principal plays a key role, for better or for worse. Several studies have concluded that the principal is not a significant force for change: principals are not picked for and expected to lead; the job assures that they will not. In the face of the evidence, I have been challenged on several occasions regarding the extent to which we put the principal "up front." My answer is that I agree with the sociological facts but disagree with any conclusion that the potentialities are not there. Indeed, to assume that things cannot be otherwise is virtually to reject the notion of schools becoming dynamic forces for educational renewal.

Our initial encounters with the 18 principals confirmed, with some exceptions, the literature on their lack of effectiveness as leaders. Their self-image was not one of leadership. They saw themselves as lacking authority, not being expected to change anything and relatively impotent even if they wished to exert influence. We saw them as vague on what they would like their schools to become, uncertain regarding teachers' expectations for them and generally lacking the skills needed for effective leadership. They were virtually unanimous, I believe, in their expectation that, in due course, we would tell them what to do and how to do it. This is, I think, a commentary of some importance on their previous experience with "helping" groups and consultants.

Early on, however, they revealed several encouraging signs. First, they sincerely wanted to come together as a group to discuss problems of mutual interest. But the language I use here is too prosaic. They wanted the fellowship of peers. The principalship is a lonely post--lonelier than that of teacher; there is only one in a school. Further, the principal is expected to be a slightly superior being, even though he or she is only too aware of limited skills, clay feet and the fact that these feet are readily exposed. The League offered colleagueship.

Second, almost to a person, they were intrigued. They anticipated a little action, and they were to have a piece of it. Although we were almost too insistent that anyone who wanted out get out early, there were no takers. I am convinced that most principals are ready to respond to even mild interest in their welfare and to overtures of the kind the League presented.

They quickly agreed to meet on a regular basis and set the first Monday of every month from 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., a schedule they maintained for six years. Even today,

ten years later, several meet wherever an opportunity presents itself. Although the League was a consortium of schools, there was in operation, as well, a consortium of principals. I believe that networks of principals, carefully put together and nurtured, in themselves would yield rich dividends for schools if proper measures are taken to avoid the creation of self-serving clubs.

The frustrations of school principals became sharply evident to me during the first year of the League's existence. I had many opportunities to talk with them--at the monthly meetings, at occasional retreats and in walks with them individually in and around their schools. At least a third spoke of their desire to get out of their work: out of education, out of the principalship, out of the present post into a similar one elsewhere, or into an alternative educational position, perhaps overseas. I have no reason to believe that most of the others felt otherwise. Although it became increasingly easy for them to confide such thoughts to me, I heard less and less about these wishes as time passed and, when they were expressed, always invariably only a year's leave of absence was proposed. The one who talked most along such lines ceased to do so in the third year of the League at the time his school was selected for physical refurbishing. (It was close to being abandoned at the time the League began.)

I could give instance after instance of "rehabilitation" of these principals, too--as persons who developed a strong sense of self-worth and became educational leaders. There is no doubt in my mind that the League associations and experiences and the impact of these on their daily work were responsible. For most, if not all of them, there appeared to be a critical incident or series of incidents, usually during the second or third year, which they weathered successfully, and as a concomitant of which they grew significantly in leadership performance. One came within a few words of

resigning. During a long telephone conversation with me (principals understood that they could and should call when in dire trouble or need), during which I mostly listened, he decided to stay on. Another was challenged by a series of letters in the local paper criticizing his school, particularly after he found their source to be citizens of a nearby school district. A third was challenged by the growing autonomy of his teachers; they seemed not to need him, to be outgrowing him.

For several, a peak experience occurred during the summer between the second and third years of the League's creation. They were participants in the |I|D|E|A| summer fellows program. A transportation crisis prevented several speakers from arriving. The center's director sought help and found it in these League principals who, volunteering to be discussion leaders, saved the day, much to their satisfaction.

What is important to note is that their monthly meetings provided a forum for recounting these experiences and getting advice and reinforcement. Their lives became a form of drama, drama shared with friends and colleagues. Their work became important.

It is imperative to understand that this progress came slowly and, at times, painfully. Even well into the second year, several members of our field staff were ready to give up completely on some of the principals. In fact, they did so to such an extent that a crisis was precipitated in our office about which I shall have something to say later. Even by the fourth year, none of us was prepared to predict high-level success for several principals and most of us predicted failure for one, but later research revealed enormous growth beginning soon after and continuing for as long as data were available.

The first year was trying, to say the least. As stated earlier, several principals endeavored to transfer their responsibilities to members of our staff. The agendas for their meetings were superficial; they sought to have input from us or guest consultants. They revealed varying degrees of ineptness in leading faculty meetings, monitoring embryonic projects, and so on. (The series of films, "The League," is revealing here.)

As I describe in The Dynamics of Educational Change, their first meeting of the second year was traumatic. They came expecting members of our staff to lay out a year's program for them. Instead, we expressed the expectation that they would use the opening meetings of their own faculties to set priorities and develop plans of action for the year. Several were furious. But it was clear that, at last, they had met the enemy and he was they. If anyone was to provide leadership in their schools, each of them was to do it.

We were well into the second year before, in my judgment, "real" problems--in the sense of those seriously troubling them on the home sites--were entered into the monthly meetings. Up to then, most of those presented were designed to camouflage what really mattered or to impress the members of our staff.

I return to where this discussion of principals began. They are key--in both aiding and blocking. But for school principals to become effective leaders in their own schools requires much more than normally is provided in a master's degree program leading to certification. Regular meetings with peers contribute a great deal, especially when principals have associated long enough to get over the need to impress one another. The agendas must be built from the stuff of daily experience in their schools. And I am convinced that there must be a respected non-peer, probably from a

neighboring university or some intermediate agency such as an education service center, who sits with them regularly. Careful pre- and post-planning (perhaps by a small executive committee), common readings and guest lecturers or consultants are important. Such work might contribute to the in-service education requirements of the school district (and should not always have to compete with other in-service demands) but must not be confused or mixed up with earning an advanced degree. To learn to be effective in one's work is a reasonable requirement for each of us.

The Network. The network aspect of the League was viewed from the beginning as an embryonic new social system whose countervailing potential was to be massaged. Nonetheless, at the outset we underestimated its significance. There were few guiding models at the time and, to our knowledge, no powerfully persuasive one in education. It was our resident sociologist, Mary Bentzen, who saw its possibilities more clearly than the rest of us and who placed it within the context of similar work in other fields.

Intuitively, we sensed that the potential usefulness of the network would not be seen by principals and teachers in the schools until they had made more progress in their own settings. Our plan was to build communication bridges with each school and then serve more and more as a switching station in arranging for individuals and groups to establish school-to-school communication.*

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*It must be remembered that there was never any comprehensive blueprint for the League. There was only the brief report I had prepared for the Kettering Foundation and several subsequent memoranda. We met weekly as a staff (a half dozen professionals and a dozen graduate students) hammering out ideas as we went along. Actually, we perseverated in the initial design (see Figure 1) for longer than we might have wished,

Our chalkboard sketches of the League showed progression from strong ties to our office (Figure 1) to weaker ties to our office but stronger school-to-school ties (Figure 2). From the beginning, I had emphasized the potential nonproductivity of our little staff, most of them part-time and all involved in research and other activities, if we sought to provide direct consulting service to the schools. Most of the resources they needed, I maintained, resided in the member schools and waited only to be further developed and unleashed. Our role should be largely one of massaging the network as a social system. I advised that we deliberately work toward our own mortality, gauging our demise to the fruition of the League concepts.

Communication was recognized as a formidable problem. The League spread across an area larger than some of our smaller states. Shaped like an elongated ellipse, 50 to 75 miles wide, it stretched from Delano on the north nearly 300 miles to San Diego in the south. Our office was a reasonably central and accessible hub.

Even though we viewed the role of the principals as critical, we realized that there was little likelihood of most teachers feeling a sense of identity with the League simply from what the principals brought back from their monthly meetings. A consortium

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largely because I was sidelined with a serious illness during the first year--completely for nearly three months and partly for another six. It was only early in the second year that weeks of meetings produced the concepts that guided us subsequently. The principals and teachers were having enough problems of their own during this first year, and it is doubtful that any accelerated push on our part to make the League work as a social system would have made much difference anyway.

Figure 1. At first, the League was less a network than a set of bilateral relationships.

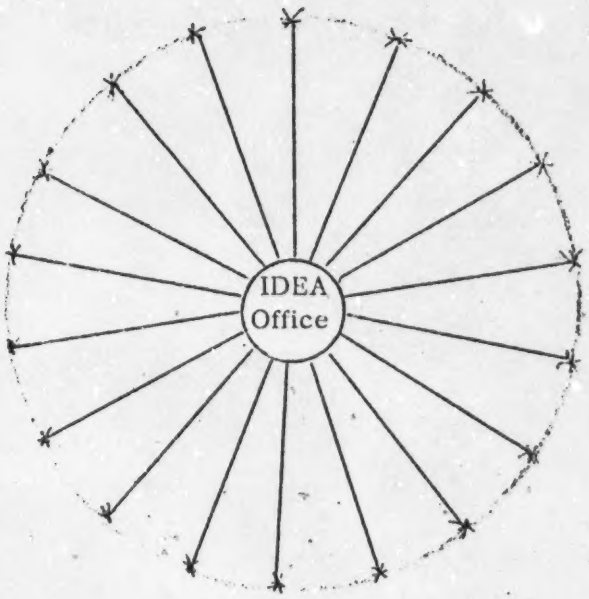

Figure 2. Our intent was to massage the school-to-school ties and diminish the strengths of bonds to our office.

of administrators is not enough. Later we discovered, somewhat to our surprise, that some principals reported to their school groups scarcely at all, partly because the staff settings for doing so had not yet been created and partly, in the case of a few, because these monthly sessions took on the character of club or guild affairs to be treated as semi-private and "precious." This illustrates again the loneliness of most principals and the appeal of the peer associations provided by the League. It also warns against the dangers of congeniality.

Early on, several of our graduate associates, most of whom were experienced educators, became liaison persons with the schools, each working with a couple of schools specifically rather than at large. We agreed that they were to work through the principals, were to help foster staff decision-making processes, were not to be consultants in the "expert" sense and were not to create a dependency relationship. In addition, they assumed some data collecting responsibilities for our research. The role proved difficult for them and for the schools. Principals often pressed them into service at faculty meetings and teacher requests caused them to appear inadequate if they did not provide immediate help. A graduate student role for mature educators is an ambiguous one at best; the further restrictions on their role in the schools, running counter to the familiar ones of straight-out consulting, created discomfort. During the second year, three members of our staff took on most of the field work and the graduate fellows moved primarily into research activities. (At this stage, we were gathering certain contextual data, administering a few instruments and generally trying to get a handle on changes taking place in staff decision-making processes in the schools.)

The most specific direct services to the teachers were annotated bibliographies on topics in which they had expressed interest. Although most teachers are not

adequately plugged into channels providing low-energy access to relevant educational literature, their expressed problem is less one of acquiring general information than of gaining access to sharply pinpointed references. At meetings, they write down the bibliographical information, usually incorrectly or incompletely, regarding this or that book extolled by the speaker but rarely secure and read it subsequently. For some, there is informational overkill; lacking some effective selecting and screening device, they are numbed into reading nothing.

Lillian Drag came to our staff with access to the necessary information networks and uncanny ability not only to select references relevant to teachers' queries and interests but also to write accurate, enticing annotations. Within days of a need being expressed directly by teachers or through our staff, a bibliography with just a very few pertinent items was available. We arranged for the purchase of inexpensive microfiche readers by each school so that even articles on relevant research were made available to teachers. Books considered to provide excellent treatment of commonly expressed topics frequently were featured in the League newsletter, Changing Schools.

Newsletters and networks seem to go hand in hand, the former largely unstudied, and unchallenged. Most newsletters begin and end, I believe, as ours started--as the pet project of an in-house writer/editor. Changing Schools began as an attractive, rather slick, nicely illustrated minor journal, with articles on educational subjects by members of our staff, news from the national educational scene, profiles of League schools prepared in our office, and so on. Our intent was to provide information on what we thought they, the teachers and principals, should know as well-informed, forward-looking educators. We were somewhat condescendingly providing for the care and feeding of the as-yet unwashed.

This we/they attitude persisted in various aspects of the symbiosis, in spite of partial recognition of it and efforts toward correction.

Appeals to those in the schools to contribute to their newsletter were almost completely ignored. The production was too glossy, the perceived literary expectations too high. We were more interested, I fear, in the growing, impressive list of requests for copies from across the nation than we were in the publication's usefulness to League members. And we simply assumed that those for whom it was intended read it.

With growing awareness of the problem, we instituted a series of highly productive changes. We asked the schools for help; each selected a reporter, with the assurance that we would do some editing so that no contributors would be embarrassed. We moved to a simpler, less slick format and more frequent publication. Little by little, the reports from the field predominated and the format became even more informal. A "classified ad" section appeared through which individuals or groups of teachers asked for or offered help on a variety of activities and problems. Small group meetings frequently resulted. Changing Schools became almost exclusively an in-house organ, involving participation from the whole of the League, not just our office, through which individuals and groups "talked" to each other about matters they perceived to be important. There are important lessons here for networks planning newsletters--and most at one time or another will contemplate publishing them.

By the third year, most of the energy of the |I|D|E|A| staff was going into massaging the League as a social system and the study of what we now perceived to be its most critical elements. Because schools ingest a certain awareness of ideas and

innovative thrusts from the larger milieu--and, of course, the League expedited this process--there was a certain similarity among the 18 schools regarding what they were trying to do. It became much easier for our |I|D|E|A| office to avoid the consultative "expert" role. We endeavored to bring together groups of teachers at differing stages of progress. A major question arising here regarding peer schools as instructional models is whether those brought together should be close or far apart in their levels of present attainment. For a school to be far ahead could be discouraging to teachers elsewhere who are just beginning. We had little opportunity to explore this question in any systematic way. My conclusion at this point is that there are times for both sets of experiences and the network structure should provide them, even to the point of looking outside from time to time for the needed resource.

Our films reveal the usefulness of a team of teachers visiting a peer school together. They see different things; they secure a rich, relatively common background for discussions back home. It is imperative that interschool visits provide opportunity for extensive questioning of teachers observed. Otherwise, visitors come away with personal prejudices confirmed or countered but with little basis for understanding alternative rationales. Once teachers gain insight into the reasons for alternatives with which they are intrigued, following up to gain the desired competence can proceed on an individual basis.

Classified ads in Changing Schools, interschool visits, whole League conferences and the like stimulated a variety of peer teaching activities. Sometimes these were arranged through our office at the request of principals or teachers; sometimes there were direct school-to-school overtures. Our conference room, which housed a small

collection of highly relevant journals and books, often was the site of workshops and seminars. Frequently, a member of our staff was asked to sit in but these were almost exclusively sessions of peers learning from peers. The success of this rather informal kind of staff development has led me to recommend the creation of pedagogical service centers with functions similar to those now served by some teacher centers. I shall say a little more on this subject later.

The logistics of interschool visiting and, to a lesser degree, peer teaching present some problems, but I am convinced that the benefits are so great that every effort should be made to make these activities standard operating procedure in school networks. At first, League principals became insecure over the prospect of releasing teachers during the school day for this purpose. They appeared threatened over teachers not being down the hall in their classrooms. Those principals who took the lead rather easily convinced the others at monthly meetings. It is much easier to arrange for the release of one teacher rather than several, but at least some group visits are essential, I believe, especially early in any process of change or innovation. Principals have a role to play when a group of teachers returns from a visit: in showing the kind of interest that will make this an approved activity, in arranging for follow-up discussions, and in utilizing the potential for benefits with the entire faculty. Likewise, the principal and teachers of the host school are faced with problems of how best to serve both their own interests and those of the visitors. Unfortunately, school and classroom visitation is still a rather primitive professional activity. Its perfection as an in-service staff development tool deserves attention.

Early in the League's development, participants experienced the jokes and snide remarks of peers in non-League schools. Principals were asked by fellow principals

how things were going "out on the funny farm." Superintendents gave varying levels of support, good intentions occasionally aggravating the threat to other schools. Little by little, and then with accelerating speed, LCS norms began to prevail and the LCS infrastructure to provide necessary support and encouragement. Creative teachers tended to gain recognition first outside of their own districts. As early as the second year, several League teachers found themselves serving for the first time as consultants to in-service programs in neighboring districts. The summer experience as |I|D|E|A| fellows of several principals, described earlier, in turn pushed them well along the road toward autonomy as professional leaders.

From the beginning, the League sought to establish serious professional norms, with the local school as the place for it all to come together: the importance of the principal, the necessity of establishing staff decision-making processes, the teacher having both authority and accountability for instructional decisions, the necessity of and the potentiality for personal growth, recourse to relevant data sources, openness to new ideas and willingness to look critically at alternatives, respect for fellow educators and the profession, realistic expectations for external resources, awareness of being part of something larger than one's self, and so on. In many quarters today, ideas like these are rejected as "corny," "unrealistic" or simply too difficult to put together. In League activities, however, they were talked about very little; they were simply assumed--not by everybody, of course, but by a significant critical mass.

It is fair to say, I think, that these norms were sufficiently established for them to be as real as any visible onging activities. If asked today about what was important and meaningful in the LCS and what they miss most today in their present positions

(several of the principals are now superintendents or hold administrative positions elsewhere), I believe that most of the principals would refer in some way to these norms and what they meant for them as individuals and professionals. It is my belief that a significant percentage of school principals and teachers went into education as a vocation with altruism providing part of the motivation. And it is depressing for me, in looking about, to see how little of what educators should be is reinforced by the societal, institutional and organizational press of which they are a part.

The League clearly became a salient new social system capable not only of eliciting high-level professional behavior on the part of many of its participants but also of countervailing many of these established procedures and practices reconstruction is intended to change. I shall not go into detail here; some of the data are available in our books. Member schools used the LCS to legitimate a good deal of what they sought to do. In the past, much of our effort to improve schooling has focused on the individual principal or teacher but, as stated earlier, what they can and will do is largely determined by the school's culture. This culture, in turn, is too fragile to be countervailing or to stand alone in the face of bureaucratic encumbrances and restraints. The League apparently provided a legitimizing infrastructure for reform without curtailing individual creativity or local school autonomy.

The Change Process or Cycle. There was discernible in the schools a cycle of change rather unlike that described in extant literature, circa 1966. We concluded that much of the literature was addressed to what change should look like or could be like under various sets of circumstances. Lieberman and Shiman (1973) provide a summary of the process as we observed it in many of the schools. I have paraphrased their

findings here and elaborated from data available after their paper was written.

1. A few teachers begin to talk about the possibility of bringing about some kind of change within the school. The League created an expectation that something of the kind would occur. Perhaps they hear an alternative drummer, perhaps there has been criticism of the school or of schooling generally that has gotten to them, perhaps motivation has come from an ongoing process of DDAE. There is uneasiness, a desire to do something and a good deal of inertia and uncertainty. The "Tell us what to do" syndrome is evident (Lieberman, ed., 1971). This is Lewin's stage of "unfreezing" (Lewin, 1947).

2. Some activity ensues. Individually or in teams teachers begin to do something. Total staff participation is rare. The principal often is a critical force here, for better or for worse. With support from him or her or elsewhere (our staff played a constructive role in some instances), enthusiasm mounts.

3. After a little progress, those involved become apprehensive. Perhaps they have heard some criticism from colleagues and begin to wonder: "Am I really providing for individual differences? Is this better than what I was doing before?" This is the point at which association with others could be productive; membership in a network could and should provide the needed interaction. We found that a simple sharing of ideas and approaches was sufficient at this point. I believe that a visit to another school at this stage easily could be harmful and requires very careful handling. Our films show the concern of some teachers about the pupil movement and noise they had observed in other settings, a concern sufficient to cause abandonment of a newborn, similar project or method back home.

4. Positive reinforcement from a respected, trusted source leads to bolder experimentation and some refinement of the practice. Observation of and discussion with peers engaged in similar activity is now very productive. The individual or team gains confidence from an exchange with others trying the same things.

5. All sorts of related parts of the program begin to look shabby and questionable. Individualized instruction smacks up against total group testing and reporting practices. If the kindergarten and lower grade teachers have created a nongraded primary unit, they find themselves frustrated with the expectation of preparing children for the fourth grade--unless a total staff DDAE process has anticipated such a problem, which it should. Again, the principal's role in assuring such anticipation looms large.

6. It is almost impossible to document the outcomes of the next cycle but some of its characteristics and ramifications are reasonably predictable. At least some of the staff will begin to see the interrelationships among curriculum, school organization, and a host of instructional procedures. The impact of this can be overwhelming. Some staffs will exhaust themselves in pursuing too many lines at once; these often are the staffs who are "burned" by innovation and whose past always is more significant than its present. Some will draw in and perseverate along lines already established. The mature staff (high DDAF appears to be a good index of maturity) sorts out the component parts and builds an agenda for dealing with them both separately and in some reasonably related fashion.

At this stage, competent help from outside is a virtual necessity. This is the point at which one need not fear aborting the need for school personnel to become self-directing, to fly alone in the sense that Bentzen (1974) uses "the magic feather principle." Schools as now constructed and conducted do not have within themselves all the resources

they need for effective reconstruction. One function of networks is to bring together at approximately the optimum time the need for specific help and relevant resources. This timing is not likely to occur unless the network either itself maintains a monitoring research function or arranges for it on a continuing basis. Our office, as the hub of the League, performed such a function, becoming increasingly skilled in what is required during the concluding year of the project.

Role and Operation of the Hub. One of the most important and least studied aspects of networks is the office referred to here as the hub. It will be recalled that we preordained the mortality of the |I|D|E|A| office, on the assumption that there would come a time when it would not be required. I no longer take this position. Some such agency as part of a network is essential, I maintain. It should not cease to function but, rather, should change responsively as the needs of the schools change. Indeed, since it is an integral part, for it to fail to change with the rest of the system is for it to become dysfunctional.

I believe there is sufficient description on preceding pages to provide an adequate picture of the tasks engaged in and the services provided by our staff: informational input regarding extant innovations and potentially useful products, annotated bibliographies, assistance with problem and resource identification, participation in a leadership training program for principals, organization of meetings and conferences, and so on. Our purpose was to assure that school personnel would develop the skills they needed for continuing renewal of their work places and that a supportive infrastructure would be created out of the usual elements of schooling. We worked toward a responsive model of educational change (Goodlad, 1976).

The conceptual model, corrected to include the continuing presence of some supportive, non-punitive agency serving as a hub, is a sound one, I believe. But there are major staffing problems. For such offices to be financed through foundations or government grants is to create a termination date for employees (whose minds are on this fact at least a year before the established date) and the kind of insecurity in moral support to schools with which teachers are only too familiar. But to create, for example, new offices staffed permanently with state or district employees could result in another bureaucratic layer and assure that the countervailing characteristics desired will not be acquired.

I have no good answers for such problems but several possibilities present themselves. One is the utilization of existing educational agencies such as the regional education service center (as in Texas) or the county office of education (as in California) which do not operate schools but exist to provide variously defined services. They already possess substantial professional staffs and the capability for mounting various kinds of improvement programs. They have the advantage of including many school districts and so do not represent some single set of guiding restraints. Also, they usually are funded from at least both federal and state sources. These so-called intermediate agencies may very well represent the most promising locus for the hub. The current efforts of Education Service Center Region XII in Waco, Texas, to serve in this role for an ongoing league of schools bear watching and study.

Another possibility is some field services agency of a school of education. It must be an organized part of the university that has specific responsibility for field service. Leaving the matter to the goodwill of momentarily interested faculty members simply will not work. The unit within the university must be capable of providing rewards

and opportunities for faculty members or securing their services will be a never-ending problem. The ability of the university to respond adequately will depend much more on what are considered to be priorities within than on any exhortations or requests from schools. However, there are signs that suggest growing pressure on schools of education to perform more along the lines of schools of agriculture than as academic departments, especially now that the teacher shortage is behind us. Schools of education may be able to serve more successfully in the future as hubs of networks than is the case now. But this will require a reorientation to field service.

A very promising alternative is the deliberate creation or utilization of intermediate agencies to serve as switching stations for the resources residing in both the collaborating schools and school systems and in universities, using existing agencies as a nucleus. For example, a small team of persons with varied talents could be designated by the director of an existing service center as responsible for the care and feeding of a network. There should be no effort to expand the size of this staff to meet rising demands. Rather, they would massage the social system of the network, as we did with the LCS, and bring in university personnel (and perhaps others) temporarily, according to the nature of current need. Or, a formal agreement could be made with the university to conduct needed research, for example.

The various parts of our total educational enterprise go about their business in shocking isolation from one another. It is almost impossible for any combination of resources--and the alternatives are virtually infinite--to be less productive than what currently exists.

As has been suggested earlier, many of the most difficult problems pertaining to the hub's effectiveness lie within. The concept of helping others to become self-renewing

appears straightforward enough on the surface but it is fraught with difficulties when one moves beyond the rhetoric to implementation.

Usually, persons chosen for various kinds of positions beyond school and classroom (supervisors, curriculum specialists and the like) presented for the post some specialized credentials based on experience, academic preparation or both. Usually, too, the recognized expertise was in something closely relevant to existing school and classroom programs: teaching social studies or language arts, preparing and using materials, individualizing instruction, etc. Consequently, on moving to the new position, they view themselves as experts whose job it is to advance their particular interest. This is as it should be for conventional purposes.

But such persons do not necessarily possess the attitudes, skills and abilities best suited to the development of autonomy, confidence and maturity in others. Indeed, the very talents and self-image they possess actually may interfere with the goal of developing self-renewing capability in others. We see the ubiquitous Peter Principle at work.

My experience to date suggests that I would endeavor to select from existing personnel or staff the hub with persons oriented more to the development of people than to specific elements of school programs. The necessary qualifications sometimes are found in persons prepared as curriculum generalists, in counseling and in behavioral aspects of administration. It would be ideal if they had a second string to their bow, such as subject matter competence, because such expertise sometimes provides a point of entry into the problem or demand. All should be oriented to the usefulness of data-based inquiry into the system, but not all need preparation in research methodology. Ultimately, all sorts of specialized talents will be needed but these can be provided on an ad hoc basis.

Maintaining a balance between providing too much and too little direct, consulting assistance is a delicate matter. The staff of the hub simply must maintain a dialogue regarding the desired balance, using specific examples from its ongoing experience in the field. Feedback from research and field reports can be invaluable in making the necessary decisions. Resolving the issues of how much, when and in what ways to intervene in the schools was the most difficult internal problem my colleagues and I confronted. It is discussed at some length in The Dynamics of Educational Change (Goodlad, 1975).

The problem cannot be resolved through the creation of clear-cut policy guidelines. Indeed, the problem does not take on any single configuration for long; it changes in character over time. It would be interesting to study network hubs for several years of their operation to see if the cycle we experienced is unique or reasonably consistent:

1. During the first year, when the schools were relatively passive and uninvolved with the League, the demands were of the low-energy variety. There was interest in the innovative ideas of the time; what was going on across the country--in being connected with the larger educational scene. We met these demands in relatively low-energy ways: discussions at various meetings, provision of speakers, sending members of our staff out to schools, the newsletter, annotated bibliographies, etc. Undoubtedly, there was a good deal of rather informal, casual "consulting" of supposed expert with client.

We probably could have perseverated indefinitely along these lines had the main purpose of the League been to introduce these school staffs to a wider array of information and resources and help clarify extant ideas for reform. But this was a secondary purpose--indeed, more a means to an end than an end in itself.

This first-year activity was relatively low key, comfortable and non-threatening. There was little tension between inner and outer forces, between dissimilar organisms in a symbiosis. For a network to provide only for such a purpose probably is of some use. It meets the criterion of low-energy access to trusted information (Miles and Lake, 1975). Just as this kind of operation produced little inner-outer tension for the schools, it created no tension in the hub, either. In fact, the needs of our research fellows to relate their work with |1|D|E|A| to their doctoral studies created more.

2. The major problem created during this period was a kind of informational overkill. Although we attempted to be highly selective in the choice of references for reading, for example, the expressed interests covered a wide array of topics. We probably contributed to initial inertia by seeking to provide whatever input was requested. Continuation along these lines probably would have produced a certain immunity to this input. Had nothing changed, would the teachers and principals have continued to read as much during the fourth and fifth years as they did during the first and second?

In the LCS, the expectations were for more. The monthly meetings with principals undoubtedly cultivated these expectations, as did the developing dialogues in the schools. There is no doubt that our staff worked to create them. There were expressions of weariness with informational input, especially from the principals. There was increasing demand for an agenda of activities to be provided by the staff of the hub.

The second year presented our staff with the difficult problem of shifting from expectations for an action-oriented agenda developed by us to plans for improvement developed by each school staff. Although the principals early in the year experienced

the crisis of meeting themselves as the enemy, this did not end their looking to us in order to be saved from themselves. And there was a sharp split within our staff as to whether we should "temporarily" be the saviors or whether we should make clear that they had to work things out for themselves, with our moral support and encouragement. Our ambivalence persisted over many months.

Interestingly, the performance of our research role, perhaps more than any logical arguments, turned the tide toward the position that the people in the schools would have to do what was required largely for themselves. The feedback of research findings perhaps would help them make better decisions. And so we shifted more and more from providing information about educational practices to giving principals and teachers information about themselves. This decision was strongly resisted and, indeed, not followed in practice, by several members of our staff.

3. The third phase overlaps the others and grew in importance as the project progressed. This emerged from growing awareness of the potential of the network on the part of all involved. Our role in the hub became one of bringing together small groups with like interests from all the schools, first in conferences and then through arranging interschool visits. We were now less an information center than a switching station. The nature of the newsletter and the activities of our staff changed accordingly. The importance of research as a source of information and guidance increased markedly.

4. The fourth phase called once again for providing a great deal of informational input but with a difference. During the first phase, the materials provided were more on what was new and innovative and less on how to do it. To some degree, it was a trial-and-error process of trying to figure out what might intrigue someone into getting

started. We wanted to show that we could be useful. But after teachers had drawn from one another, many wanted to go on beyond what they thought their peers could provide. They wanted the specialized knowledge and skills of a recognized expert, much as a surgeon wants to watch and then assist someone skilled in a new technique. We performed still as a switching station, but looking this time outside of the network for the required expertise. With this phase came increased desire on the part of League participants to serve in expert roles beyond interaction with fellow League members.

My general conclusion from all of this is that it is better for members of the hub staff to remain a step or two removed from specialized "expert" roles. The guiding question should be, "How do I best help this person grow in confidence and ability to be largely self-sufficient, to learn to use resources so as to acquire competence rather than dependence?" The temptation always is to massage one's own ego, to be the expert in all things. Yielding to it readily corrupts the process and aborts the desired outcomes.

Pedagogical Service Stations. One potentially powerful element of a network deliberately designed to effect school improvement is what I have named "pedagogical service stations." They are temporary stations, perhaps mobile, where a teacher (or several teachers) with recognized competence in some specific aspect of instruction teaches other teachers in this single domain. For some purposes, the facility used should be large enough to include children. If interest in the topic or subject is widespread, those staffing the station might move about in the way circuit teachers moved about, years ago, to teach children. The teaching staff would be released temporarily

from their regular classroom duties; they would return to them just as soon as what they had to offer had been disseminated rather widely.

Such pedagogical service stations could be operated as part of teacher centers but should not be confused with them. The only characteristic seemingly common to teacher centers is that they are run for and by teachers. But even this generalization probably is overdrawn. Some of the teacher centers I visited in England, although supposedly fully run by teachers, very much reflected the orientation of the head person--who sometimes acted like a headmaster or headmistress and, frequently, formerly had been one. Also, these centers often reflected certain realities of their geographic setting. For example, some teacher centers in London appeared to be serving primarily social functions. Young teachers coming in from the country are desperately lonely and seek out the teacher center (with its inexpensive bar and evening activities) as a place to make friends and find companions. Some emphasize formal courses, very much as do some universities here, especially through extension. A center in a rural setting, on the other hand, may be valued most for providing exposure to new instructional materials. Teacher centers, as I saw them in England, are in some ways the converse of or supplementary to a network such as the League of Co-operating Schools.

The pedagogical service station would be designed to provide for needs made apparent through the operation of a network such as the LCS. The hub, with its antennae tuned in to emerging needs and its data-collecting activities alert to resources, could play a role in setting up a station in time to meet rising demands. Instead of seeking out possibly relevant courses in a university (often blocked to teachers not desiring graduate credit), the hub would arrange for a teacher's release to instruct fellow

teachers for a period of weeks or months. The university's role in providing initial preparation for other positions would not be confounded; teachers would gain the on-the-job renewal required for improvement in their present positions.

We began to see the possibilities for such stations only as our association with the League was coming to an end. Consequently, discussion of their potential is based on our success with very informal arrangements rather than with something formalized to the point of released time for teachers, in-service credits and the like. Nonetheless, such arrangements offer clear benefits and appear to be within the limits of practicality.

The League as Infrastructure

It becomes clearly apparent that the LCS was much more than a conduit or branching set of conduits through which flowed ideas from some generating source. Indeed, if something of this sort is what comes to mind when the word "network" is used, then it should not be applied to the LCS, even though the interconnections facilitated the flow of information and ideas. It would be exceedingly difficult to pinpoint any single generating source once the new social system was functioning. A mature league of schools, of the kind described on preceding pages, is made up of units and individuals who both generate and receive. The balance between giving and receiving varies over time.

The LCS--in its totality comprising individual schools, linked schools, a hub, a diverse array of people and activities, and linkages beyond what has been described here--might be described more accurately as an ecosystem within which subsystems maintain both their own identity and contribute significantly to the larger system of which they are a part. There are relatively similar subsystems (schools as a class) and quite dissimilar ones (e.g., the hub), a necessary condition of symbiosis. Both the retention of dissimilarity and the interplay between the subsystems or social organisms

are essential to creating and maintaining the productive tension necessary for continuous change and renewal. The connections between subsystems constitute the network of veins and arteries through which communications are maintained.

Healthy functioning of the ecosystem assures that each school will be an open system and not a closed-off, anachronistic, sterile culture. But this larger ecosystem also can become unhealthy if, for example, the several subcultures become increasingly similar and ultimately coopt or capture each other. Consequently, it is essential that its communications system be connected with a host of outside sources of information, ideas, criticism, evaluation, interchange and the like. Otherwise, the entire infrastructure and all that it supports will become complacent and unresponsive, as we fear much of the present educational enterprise already has become.

Connections with the larger social order include the bonds between schools and the districts of which they are a part, the individual connections of teachers and principals with communities, a variety of linkages with professional associations, formal and informal arrangements with R and D centers, and on and on. The creation of social systems such as the LCS in no way diminishes the need for superintendents of schools, research and development activities, citizens' advisory councils, etc. However, selecting the school as the key unit for educational improvement gives all of these groups a common focus and probably reorientation that will require new attitudes and activities. I have described some of what will be needed in The Dynamics of Educational Change.

At the top of any list of requirements is the need for a badly divided education profession to heal itself. Recent polls suggest (Gallup, 1976) that a significant proportion of the lay public is now ready to help--so long as we never forget that the purpose is improving our schools, one by one in large numbers.

SOME OBSERVATIONS, GENERALIZATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Throughout what precedes, I have endeavored to combine descriptive narrative with observations on problems and difficulties, tentative generalizations regarding what appear to be promising directions and equally tentative conclusions about strenghts and weaknesses of a strategy for school improvement. Although this paper was motivated and guided by the growing interest in networking as a way to effect this improvement and focused on the networking aspects of our strategy, I have deliberately dealt with much more. Grandiose expectations for and excessive promotion of networking, an exceedingly promising concept, can lead only to further disillusionment regarding the prospects for our schools. The concept is only one of several to be brought together in seeking to develop self-renewing schools.

It is perhaps not necessary to reflect further on my experiences with the League. Nonetheless, I feel compelled, by way of a summary, to put forward several observations, generalizations and conclusions suggested by what already has been said but not necessarily made explicit in the foregoing.

About Low- and High-Energy Systems

The creation of networks requiring very little energy for their maintenance can be exceedingly useful for keeping various groups of people up to date on developments in their field, for providing opportunities to exchange ideas on common problems, for securing information quickly regarding the present preoccupations of persons involved, and so on. Especially in these times, when a court order can quickly change the legal structure within which boards of education and administrators must function, an established

network serves almost automatically to provide both the necessary information and opportunities to discuss alternative lines of response. The use of such networks is not new; superintendents, in particular, have recognized their usefulness for years.

These low-energy systems usually involve persons with similar responsibilities and professional interests: school board members, or superintendents, or principals, or teachers of vocational education, etc. They serve to accelerate the rate of disseminating knowledge which probably would be acquired later by even less formal means and so are of particular importance when new laws, rules, or regulations demand new behaviors. It seems reasonable to assume, also, that behavior in voluntary areas ultimately is affected simply because individuals are exposed to new ideas within the "press" of collegial relationships. Even low-energy networks often bring about some kinds of change by creating socialization pressures within the social systems they constitute.

However, networks made up only of colleagues of like interests and positions hold potentiality for both retarding and advancing change. Indeed, the reassurance of one's colleagues to the effect that what is now being done is best frequently preserves the status quo in the face of vigorous thrusts for change from outside the system which might be resisted less readily if individuals stood alone. Countervailing ideas and tendencies which might create tensions if let into the network are effectively kept outside.

On the other hand, if networks are to serve to develop and maintain self-renewing processes, relatively high expenditures of energy are required. From the beginning, the system must contain dissimilar organisms with differing self-interests. Seeking to admit dissimilar elements after a relatively homogeneous system has been created is a very slow approach to change--primarily because great caution will be exercised in assuring that outsiders admitted have high potential for becoming good insiders. For example, a network

of superintendents may bring in the university professor who recently was a superintendent and not the social psychologist who is likely to challenge the conventional wisdom of school administration. Not only must dissimilar elements be present from the beginning as equals but, in addition, the system created must be designed to assure openness to still other countervailing influences.

My experience suggests that the dissimilarity in members must extend beyond differences in the institutions employing them. Some members of our staff in the hub were employed because they appeared to possess at relatively high levels the kinds of competencies to be developed in school personnel. Others were employed because of their greater interest in conceptual models, inquiry, and research. As time went on, the former group became more and more like its clientele in the schools and it was necessary to shift our emphases more and more to the functions of research and inquiry in order to maintain the necessary tension of symbiosis.

There are profound implications here for staffing the hub. The tendency will be, especially if the intermediate agency or hub is part of the regular educational system (e.g., the county office), to staff it entirely with school personnel who have done well as teachers, supervisors, or administrators. It is exceedingly important, therefore, that attention be given to including individuals who have a different kind of contribution to make, such as research, evaluation, building information systems, and so on. Maintaining the tension required for constructive educational improvement inevitably calls for relatively intense commitments and high expenditures of energy among diverse groups of participants.

About the Underlying Theory

The dominant theory of educational change and improvement often is described as one first requiring the setting of purposes and then following these purposes with the selection

of activities and the evaluation of these activities through measuring the attainment of measurable goals in the products (students). Models derived from this theory have been widely used in military affairs, business, industry, and various aspects of government. House (1974) describes the use of this model in educational reform of the 1960's. Persons from outside of the schools sought to intervene through bringing better materials, organizational forms and teaching methods to teachers in the schools who were viewed as relatively passive and unresisting. House and other critics have concluded that these efforts, accompanied by the relatively large-scale federal funding, in general failed to produce the hoped-for outcomes. Studies of innovations assumed to have been installed conclude that no significant differences in student performances could be identified (see, for example, American Institutes for Research, 1976).

In the 1970's, there has been growing recognition of the need to involve users or practitioners in efforts to improve educational practice. Networking of groups, individuals, projects or schools is one way to stimulate such involvement. One must question whether this and other approaches to improved knowledge utilization and reform is simply an alternative implementation of the prevailing theory described above or whether there is growing recognition of an alternative theory. In all probability, both are occurring. However, I am exceedingly skeptical about there being any diminution of confidence in the theory that has dominated for so long in human affairs, at least in western countries.

There is ample evidence for the conclusion that most people view school improvement in relatively simplistic terms. The "back-to-the-basics" movement is the current manifestation of this belief--a manifestation which never disappears but which comes on very strongly at intervals. It is the same simplistic set of views that was embedded in the

criticisms of the early 1950's and which stimulated some of the movements toward reform in the late 1950's and early 1960's. And these views will serve us no better today than they did two decades ago. I fear that there are those who view increased recognition of needs and interests expressed at the local level as simply providing the data necessary for more sophisticated intervention from the outside, with the practitioner regarded as less passive than before but no less vulnerable to enlightened manipulation.

An alternative theory of educational change and improvement begins with the fundamental assumption that persons in schools already have purposes which they are trying to achieve--purposes not necessarily made explicit and which do not diverge markedly from the purposes we hold in general for our schools--and that these individuals are both interested in and capable of improving the educational settings of which they are a part. The responsibility of the surrounding milieu is to reinforce those implicit purposes, not to demand that school personnel defend them. This milieu has no right to impose on practitioners the specific methods they must use in doing what they believe to be important. Rather, it is the responsibility of the surrounding society to continue to articulate guiding goals, to provide support and encouragement and to create the kinds of tension between inner and outer forces likely to assure continuing self-renewal in schools.

Admittedly, this is an ideal. But there is in it more challenge and motivation than implied in most approaches to accountability. My experience suggests that, so far as educational improvement is concerned, any theory emphasizing the worth and abilities of those ultimately responsible for effecting improvement is the one likely to produce results. Such a theory eschews linear approaches emanating from the outside, with feedback loops tied to the efficient attainment of goals, and promotes criteria applied directly to the quality

of educational experiences. Above all, this theory eschews the concept of the practitioner or the school as target for changes designed by remote persons who claim to know what is best for local schools and classrooms.

About the School as the Locus for Improvement

Ironically, although it is "the school" that is most often cited for its imperfections, improvement almost invariably has focused on some specific element of schooling rather than on the school as a social institution--on principals or teachers or the subjects of the curriculum or pedagogy. Indeed, the educational enterprise is organized so as to emphasize the parts and not the whole. Teachers and principals belong to professional associations (usually different ones) but no organization represents schools as entities. Admittedly, schools as units are examined for accreditation purposes. Curriculum development focuses on the separate components of the curriculum not on what the total curriculum of an elementary, junior high, or secondary school should look like. The curriculum division of most state departments of education is organized primarily around subject fields but, to my knowledge, staff specialists rarely examine together the question of what the total program of a school would look like if all of their varied interests and recommendations were to come together in the finite day, week, or month of the school year. State legislators make recommendations calling for the use of time for education in drug abuse, health, safety, mathematics, or whatever, without much thought to the systemic character of schools and the impact of any change on time utilization or anything else that schools must do.

Most of the networks I have known about over the years tend to cut the schools by layers or into segments. There are networks of principals or of social studies teachers or of teachers interested in individualized instruction. Even in creating networks in schools, there is a natural tendency to get organized rather quickly into groups sharing

grade or subject matter interests rather than into groups offering more promise of keeping the school up front as the locus for change and improvement.

Persons who believe our schools need only cosmetic improvements or merely some tightening up in regard to fundamental learning and standards, are very much out of touch with what is required. While a great deal needs to be done by way of improving the quality of teaching, the intensity of learning, and the materials of instruction, there are more basic problems. Schools with high fences and with several non-uniformed police walking about clearly are in deep trouble--and this description fits large numbers of high schools. Any extensive observation of upper elementary school classrooms reveals that the curriculum is in dire need of refurbishing and that the approaches to learning are far too narrow and limited. Any detailed study of the total program from kindergarten through the twelfth grade would reveal that several of the major goals to which we are committed are being severely neglected. Such scrutiny would reveal also needless repetition of topics in the curriculum and massive accumulation of non-learning in some fields by students as they progress through the grades.

These problems are not likely to be addressed by small segments of the profession focusing on their special interests. A significant amount of good can be accomplished through the creation of networks designed to help teachers and principals do their specialized jobs better. But such approaches are not likely to take care of the kinds of problems referred to above. If these are to be productively tackled, the approach will require a common focus on the totality of the school by the principal, teachers, students, and parents, supported by the entire infrastructure to which I referred earlier. A comprehensive strategy involving focus on the individual school, networks of schools, sub-networks of principals and teachers,

a powerful hub, and a good deal of support from the existing systems will be required to effect the necessary reform and improvement.

About the People in the Process

From the beginning of the project described here, we received many inquiries about the kinds of rewards we intended to offer principals and teachers in the League of Co-operating Schools. Critics were skeptical of our potential for success when they learned that the Kettering Foundation was not providing supplementary funds, that the teachers and principals were not to receive stipends for additional work hours, that university credits would not be offered for staff development activities, and so on. We were greeted with near ridicule from many persons active in educational reform when they heard us say that we believed that most teachers and principals would respond favorably under such conditions to an invitation to join in school improvement. Quite out of step with conventional wisdom of the time, we believed that the rewards would be in the form of personal satisfaction from increased feelings of self-worth, potency, and accomplishment. Nothing has occurred to alter my belief that principals and teachers in the schools will take extraordinary measures to improve themselves if they see clear possibilities for doing so and are sure that those promising encouragement and nourishment will still be around to provide support several years later.

Of course, there were those who never responded to this challenge--for a variety of reasons. Some already were fully involved with other opportunities and challenges and saw no need to be caught up in something more. Some, because of unfulfilling early experiences with League activities, simply turned away; some of these were critics to the end. Some already were satisfied with whatever they were doing and chose to go on about their business as before. This is what people are like almost everywhere. There

is no evidence for the common assumption that they will perform better if paid more, punished, exhorted, threatened, or badgered by new laws and regulations. (In fact, regarding this last, many teachers are unaware of much of what is now required by the Education Code--Hill, 1971). Rather, it is a basic assumption of a democratic people that individuals strive toward higher levels of performance when others have faith in them rather than when they are threatened, bullied or punished.

Recently, I have been endeavoring to utilize what I learned from our League of Cooperating Schools in working with a League of 13 elementary schools located in several communities in Texas. Education Service Center Region XII serves as the hub. These principals and teachers have not been offered payments or other forms of external rewards. Again, the appeal throughout has been to their own wishes to be more competent in their work. Once again, this appeal is proving to be powerful; a gratifying reservoir of human resources is being released for school improvement.

In both the Texas and the California projects, the role of the union did not loom large; the collective bargaining law had not then been passed in California. While it is true that unions in most fields sometimes have made it difficult for employees to utilize additional time and energy, there also are gratifying instances of unions recognizing possibilities for simultaneously improving the work place and serving society better. It will be ironic if, in education, an endeavor for and by people, unions fail to be flexible in supporting principals and teachers seeking to do better by their students.

Earlier, I have referred to self-fulfilling prophecies regarding the ability of principals to be leaders and teachers to be creative. These prophecies are based on data pertaining to what now exists. It is not at all surprising that research shows school

principals to be cautious, ineffective and ambivalent in their leadership roles. This is in large measure the expectation for them and, not surprisingly, many principals conform to the expectation. Usually, they are not delegated clear authority for the operation of their schools. Usually, they are not selected with the expectation that they will provide leadership and direction. Nonetheless, it was our experience that, given the opportunity to learn new skills and the encouragement to exercise leadership, all of the principals with whom we were associated made remarkable progress. We must be very careful about interpreting data derived from one set of circumstances as setting the limits of possibility for other sorts of circumstances.

We were told by some of the leading experts on educational change that school people simply are not a promising source of creative and innovative ideas. Of course, such an assumption should be challenged at the outset, given the fact that so many of the exciting educational plans of the past emerged from individual schools and school systems. The fact that it seems more difficult to identify lighthouse schools today may suggest, once again, a self-fulfilling prophecy--if you do not expect much from principals and teachers, they won't produce much. It is our experience that clusters of teachers in all of the schools became extraordinarily imaginative not only in purposefully adapting the leading innovations of the time but also in creating their own approaches to curricular and instructional improvement.

I am now of the opinion that the major resource for improving the schools of this nation lies not in the enactments of legislators, not in state departments of education, not in preservice teacher education programs in schools of education, nor in the various centers and agencies deliberately designed for educational reform. The boundless resource is the

principals, teachers, students, and constructively interested parents associated with thousands of individual schools. But we will not come even close to tapping this resource unless all of these other resources are used for purposes of stimulation, encouragement, and direct assistance.

About the Need for Data

Even though most of the elements I believe to be essential for the development of self-renewing ability in schools were present in the League, a vital ingredient was missing from the start and never adequately developed. During recent years, the idea of "needs assessment" has become so familiar in educational jargon that we scarcely stop to think about the success of the processes implied. Many federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities increasingly are requiring some kind of needs assessment in their fields of interest before requests for grants to schools and school districts even will be considered. A little examination of what goes on suggests that the state of the art is primitive, indeed. Usually, the needs assessment is taken in the most cursory fashion; it often is an academic exercise rather than a serious attempt to identify priorities for improvement. Frequently, such assessments represent the views of committees assigned to the task, the school principal or influential members of the faculty.

In my judgment, the general inability of the staffs of League schools to identify problem areas in some systematic fashion was the weakest link in what we were endeavoring to do. Even after a year had passed, most of the principals were searching rather desperately for a problem--almost any problem--around which there might be a clustering of teacher interests. Some of the resulting projects were entered into hastily and with disastrous results, as segments of our films reveal.

It is my conclusion that most school staffs are incapable of engaging in the kind of inventory of needs, problems, and present conditions likely to be useful in building agendas for dialogue, decisions, actions, and evaluation. Further, my discussions with leadership personnel in the offices of school districts and intermediate education agencies lead me to the conclusion that only a handful of individuals employed there possess even minimal abilities for assisting school staffs with this essential process. One of our most serious problems is the lack of a well-developed methodology and accompanying instruments.

My colleagues and I who are responsible for the Research Program of |I|D|E|A| have been engaged for several years in conceptualizing the problem of taking comprehensive inventories of school programs and practices. After listing and refining literally hundreds of questions that might be asked about the daily conduct of schooling, we began the arduous task of seeking out useful instruments, ultimately devising most of them ourselves. We concluded that ethnographic techniques for inquiring into the quality of school life are at a relatively primitive stage of development. With financial assistance of a half dozen philanthropic foundations, we have managed to carry our work forward through the stages of developing and pilot testing a set of instruments designed to tell us a good deal about school programs from kindergarten through the twelfth grade, adult decision-making processes, classroom variables, school-community relations, and the expectations of various sub-publics for their schools. We will be able to compare school principals, teachers, students, parents, and some others in the community regarding their expectations, perceptions and satisfactions regarding their schools.

We have been working primarily with intermediate agencies such as county offices, education service centers, and BOCES in training their personnel in the methodology and in techniques for training others. Our primary interest is in describing what goes on in a series of schools and, through comparing these findings with possible alternative programs

and practices, in recommending an agenda of priorities for all segments of our society interested in helping schools be more effective. In addition, however, we are interested in refining this methodology so that it might be used by intermediate school districts, for example, to assist local schools within their service areas in the difficult process of examining existing practices and developing agendas for reform and improvement in which all persons connected with the school might participate. It is our hope that the districts and schools with which we are now working might become, at some point, a network utilizing solid data for self-improvement in the school units comprising the network.

After studying schools in several earlier research projects, associating closely with the 18 schools in the League, and observing the processes of school improvement generally, I am forced to conclude that we know far too little about the present conduct of schooling to propose, with assurance, what is needed for constructive reform. I know of few areas of activity where recommendations for what ought to be done are proffered so frequently without thorough knowledge of the conditions to be corrected. In the field of education, the compilation of opinions about what should be done rather than a compilation of data about what exists is virtually a national pastime. As one foundation official put it (not facetiously, I regret to say), "We don't need more research; we just need to get back to the fundamentals."

At best, the data available are almost entirely measures of effects. But without knowledge of the existing conditions that might have produced these effects, we shift from panacea to panacea, almost always with inflated expectations, and almost always with ultimate disappointment and increased disaffection with our schools.

We need national and state agendas based on hard data for purposes of identifying those kinds of educational shortcomings not likely to be remedied by local efforts alone. Such agendas would help us tremendously with the important business of allocating scarce resources wisely. But, perhaps even more important, we need local agendas for school improvement based on hard data regarding the school's present programs and practices. With such agendas before us, perhaps all those diverse groups in our society working so much at cross purposes could join forces constructively for the job that will be done together or not at all.

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